

felt for generations to come. Mr. Speaker, as we adjourn today, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering, honoring, and paying our last respects to this outstanding American—Allen Gordon Smith, Sr.

RECOGNITION OF THE FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH OF COLUMBUS' 160TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. MAC COLLINS**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Speaker, 170 years ago, while the manacles of slavery were still fastened on African Americans, twelve Christians—11 whites and a slave named Joseph—founded Columbus' first church, the Ephesus Baptist Church, which was renamed the First Baptist Church. This was in 1830, one year after Columbus, Georgia was granted its charter. Blacks and whites, slaves and free, worshiped God under one roof.

In 1840, after construction of a new building, the First Baptist Church gave the old sanctuary to the mixed black and white congregation, who reorganized as the African Baptist Church. Today, one hundred and sixty years later, after war, reconstruction, oppression, economic depression, and hardships, the First African Baptist Church is still spreading the gospel in Columbus.

This church has a long history of service to its community. Up to the advent of the Civil War, it had an ethnically diverse congregation. After the war, the church gave birth to three different churches: the Metropolitan Baptist Church in 1890, the Friendship Baptist Church in 1906, and the Mt. Tabor Baptist Church in 1908. The church sanctuary has changed four times. Today's main sanctuary was erected in 1915, when the church adopted its present name, the First African Baptist Church.

The congregation of the First African Baptist Church has weathered many storms, but the worst may have been the Great Depression. In 1936, creditors foreclosed on the church. But all was not lost, because four trustees stood in the gap and pledged their personal property to pay the debts. These men were W.A. Talley, J.J. Senior, J.H. Williams, and G.F. Rivers. The congregation stood by these four men of faith and worked to raise the funds to retire the debt.

Mr. Speaker, the First African Baptist Church congregation has been a force for good in Columbus.

Under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Robert M. Dickerson Jr., it continues to play a key role in the city. Rev. Dickerson began the "Gathering of the Children," and restructured the Youth Program. He reorganized the Christian Education ministry. He started the Tuesday noon Bible Study time, the Early Sunday morning worship services, and the Riverfront Easter Sunrise Service. He ordained 11 new deacons and established the Capital Improvement Fund for mid-range and long-range improvements. He also added three ministers to the Ministerial Staff. Additionally, Dr. Dickerson instituted the "Pastor's Unsung Hero" Award presented each November.

He is continuing his work to add new programs to bring the word and comfort of God to the people of Columbus.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the First African Baptist Church of Columbus, its congregation and its leaders. They have been doing a great work in the city for 160 years, and I trust that, Lord willing, they will be spreading the Gospel a hundred years hence.

PARSONS FAMILY FIFTIETH REUNION

**HON. WAYNE T. GILCHREST**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the fiftieth reunion of the Thomas Edward Parsons family. The Parsons family is gathering in Oxford, Talbot County, Maryland, on July 29th, to celebrate their reunion at the home of Elaine Valliant Cox. The Parsons family reunion was first held in Royal Oak, Talbot County, Maryland, at the home of William Harris Valliant and instituted to preserve family relationships as their family began to spread beyond Talbot County. The Parsons' family history has been documented in Talbot County, Maryland back to the early nineteenth century. The first reunion was advertised in a local newspaper asking descendants of Thomas and Susan Benson Parsons to gather on August 20, 1951. One hundred eleven members of the Parsons family gathered on the Valliant lawn coming from Idaho, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Maryland and Washington, DC. The oldest family member in attendance was Mrs. Margaret Parsons of Oxford, Maryland, wife of Edward Thomas Parsons. She was ninety years of age.

This year the eldest family member in attendance is Mrs. Louise Valliant Willis of Oxford, Maryland. She is ninety-nine years of age and is the daughter of Susan Parsons Valliant, the youngest member of the original twelve Parsons siblings. The youngest member will be Natalie Chance Schmidt of Easton, Maryland. About sixty Parsons family members are expected to attend from all over the country. In recent years, family members have attended the Eastern Shore reunion from as far away as Seattle, Washington.

The current generation of Parsons family members represents all walks of life from many parts of the country and from around the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The Parsons family reunion officers are Jan Valliant O'Neal of Kensington, Maryland, Marguerite Schimpff Webster of Washington, District of Columbia, Cathy Newton Schmidt of Easton, Maryland, and Robert Thomas Valliant, Jr., of Oxford, Maryland.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I want to congratulate the Parsons family for celebrating their fiftieth family reunion and honoring the significance of family in the building of our great nation.

HONORING KEVIN BRACKEN

**HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, today I honor Kevin Bracken, a native of Chicago, IL. Kevin,

through many amazing feats of athletic prowess, has earned himself a place on the U.S. Olympic Greco-Roman wrestling team. He is the only member of the Greco-Roman team from Illinois, which consists entirely of first-year Olympians. This is truly a remarkable accomplishment, and I know he will represent his country with great pride, strength, and skill.

Kevin grew up on the south side of Chicago, placing third in the 1990 State Championships for St. Laurence High School. He then attended Illinois State University, where he was a three-time qualifier for the NCAA and received the 1994 Male Athlete of the Year award. Since those early achievements in his life, he has only gone forward, constantly surpassing expectations of all those around him, no matter how high set.

His friends, family, and former teammates must be, and should be proud to witness what he has accomplished, and what he will certainly continue to accomplish in the future. Kevin is a credit to all those who have held faith in him, and through perseverance and extraordinary effort, he has earned his place among the elite of his profession.

Mr. Speaker, I offer my congratulations to Kevin Bracken, and wish him the best of luck in his continuing career. I am sure he will continue to make them proud.

RECOGNIZING BRADENTON, FL, AS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

**HON. DAN MILLER**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to congratulate a city in my congressional district, Bradenton, FL. Bradenton has been recognized in the July 2000 issue of Money magazine as one of the best places to retire. Money quotes Bradenton as, "a perfect Florida beach town for sun and sailing." I agree and believe it is much more than that.

With 238 sunny days a year it is no surprise to me that this area made headlines. The coastal community with a population under 50,000 is located just south of Tampa Bay. Bradenton's 27 miles of beautiful, white and beaches provide the perfect environment for sailing, skiing, fishing and various outdoor activities.

The criteria used by Money to evaluate nearly 500 communities included population, opportunities for educational advancement, outdoor activities, cultural amenities, quality of medical care, and accessible transportation. Factors that also influenced the ratings were cost of living, taxes, and home prices. Today's seniors live an active lifestyle, so each community was also evaluated on the various activities in the area.

Bradenton offers an array of cultural attractions including the Golden Apple Dinner Theater and the Florida West Coast Symphony. The South Florida Museum and Bishop Planetarium is a unique complex that features cultural and historical exhibits and laser light shows. The ballet, the opera, art galleries, historical parks, and museums are all within the city limits. Retirees can stay busy at the various outdoor festivals throughout the year.

Bradenton is home to the Pittsburgh Pirates spring training complex and is within an hour's

drive to three professional sports teams. Retirees can enjoy the areas 24 nationally recognized golf courses, including Legacy Golf Course designed by Arnold Palmer.

The warm weather and casual atmosphere truly make Bradenton a wonderful retirement community. I am honored that Bradenton received such outstanding recognition.

It is not just the weather, infrastructure, healthcare system, and recreation opportunities that make Bradenton a nationally recognized place to retire; it is the great people who live there. The people of Bradenton are truly second to none and make everyone feel welcome. I know, I moved there over 40 years ago and am proud to call it my home. Money magazine has further shown the country just how great my hometown is.

IN RECOGNITION OF DONALD  
VICKERS

**HON. RALPH M. HALL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. HALL of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to a fine American and great Texan, Mr. Donald Vickers of Blossom, TX.

In 1942, at the age of 16, Donald Vickers felt the need to fight for his country during World War II. He left his home in Blossom and joined the Army, and his service to his country lasted 31 years and 7 months, during which time he fought in World War II, Korea, the Cuban conflict, and Vietnam.

This fine gentleman, who is revered by friends and family and lovingly called "Papa Donald", received his early training at Camp Shelby, MS, and soon after was sent to fight in North Africa. Later he trained in England and was a part of the fateful landing on D-Day, during the Normandy Invasion. He served in the European theater operation from 1943 to 1945, being assigned to a Tank Destroyer Battalion. In 1946 he re-enlisted and later served in Korea as an advisor to the 59th Republic of Korea Army Tank Company. During the Cuban conflict he was deployed off Cuba in the LST's, which were ready to land both men and equipment. His first tour in Vietnam from December 1965 to December 1966 was with the 25th Infantry Division, 69th Armor Battalion. After serving stateside in 1967, he was assigned to serve with the Military Advisors Corp in Vietnam from December 1968 to December 1969. His other tours of duty included Germany and Hawaii. Stateside, he served in Mississippi, Kansas, Georgia, California, New Jersey, New Mexico, and later, back home in Texas, before he retired from the service in August 1974.

Donald Vickers, now Sergeant Vickers, has been awarded numerous decorations during his many years of service. These include the Combat Infantry Badge, Purple Heart with 2 Clusters, Bronze Stars with V device and 2 Clusters, ARCOM with 3 Clusters, Good Conduct Medal with Silver Bar and 1 Leaf, Vietnam Service Medal with 1 Silver and 3 Bronze Service Stars, WWII Victory Medal, European and Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, National Defense Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and Korean Service Medal. In addition, he has received written commendations from his com-

manding officers which reflect their recognition of his courage, his patriotism, leadership and dedication to his country, his men, and the Army.

Mr. Vickers has been married for many years to Mary Jo Vickers. They have 5 children, 10 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. It was one of their granddaughters, Mrs. Cassidy Fuess, of Denton, TX, who in her devotion to her grandfather and desire to share his history with others, contacted me to tell his story. My thanks to Cassidy, her grandfather, and their family for their devotion to those values that Americans hold dear—love of their country and love for their family. I am proud that they are from my district, and I appreciate the opportunity to recognize Sgt. Donald Vickers and his family today.

THE CHILD PROTECTION/ALCOHOL  
AND DRUG PARTNERSHIP ACT

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University released a report last year which found that alcohol and drug abuse cause or exacerbate 7 out of every 10 cases of child abuse or neglect. Regrettably, child welfare workers and judges are not always sufficiently trained in how to detect and cope with substance abuse problems. And of even greater concern, when accurate assessments are made, there is often a lack of available treatment. In fact, the Department of Health and Human Services reports that 63 percent of all mothers with drug problems do not receive any substance abuse treatment within a year.

To combat this threat to child safety and family stability, I am introducing the Child Protection/Alcohol and Drug Partnership Act, which would improve the prevention, screening, and treatment of substance abuse for parents with children in the child welfare system. The bill would provide \$1.9 billion over the next five years to States that develop cooperative arrangements between their substance abuse and child abuse agencies to provide services to the parents of at-risk children. Bipartisan companion legislation has been introduced by Senators SNOWE, ROCKEFELLER, DEWINE, and DODD.

Under the bill, the funding would be disbursed to States based on the number of children in the State. To receive their allotment under the program, States would be required to spend a match starting at 15% in 2001, rising to 25% in 2005. In addition, they would be required to provide a detailed analysis of their current efforts to address substance abuse issues for families in the child welfare system and specify the additional steps they intend to pursue with the new funding (supplanting of existing funds would be prohibited). Funding could be used for a variety of specific activities, including: providing preventive and early intervention services for children of parents with alcohol and drug problems; expanding the availability of substance abuse treatment, including residential treatment, for parents involved with the child welfare system; and improving the screening and assessment of sub-

stance abuse problems for families in the child welfare system.

I urge my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this proposal, which is strongly supported by the Children's Defense Fund, the Child Welfare League of America, the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, and the American Public Human Services Association.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
CAN REDUCE ACCIDENTS

**HON. DIANA DeGETTE**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Ms. DeGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to one of the leading causes of injury and death to small children—backing vehicles. Most Americans probably do not give much thought to backing out of their driveway, or a parking space at the local supermarket. Yet reversing the car presents a danger to our children, as well as to the disabled and elderly, that can no longer be ignored.

Children under the age of two are more likely to suffer non-traffic-related injuries or fatalities in driveways, parking lots, or sidewalks than any other age group. Moreover, over half of all pedestrian injuries to children in this age group occurs when a vehicle is backing up. Toddlers are especially vulnerable because they are exposed to traffic threats that exceed their cognitive, developmental and sensory abilities. Children have difficulty judging speed, spatial relationships and distance. The risk to disabled individuals and the elderly must also be considered, as they can be unable to move out of the way of a backing vehicle. The risk is augmented as cars get bigger and taller, increasing a driver's "blind spot" behind the car, making the driver unaware of what my lie behind.

Unfortunately, families in my home state of Colorado are already painfully aware of the danger posed by backing vehicles. In Greeley, Colorado, a grandfather accidentally backed over his 18-month-old grandson with a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV), killing the child last December. A few months later, tragedy struck a couple in Denver when an elderly man on an electric scooter was fatally injured when his wife accidentally backed their minivan into him in the driveway of their home.

At this time, there are no concrete studies to show the dangers of backing vehicles. I ask the Department of Transportation to conduct a study to determine the number of fatalities, injuries and property damage caused by slow-speed backing vehicle accidents. I urge my colleagues to support such a study.

HONORING DONALD WEBER

**HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 27, 2000*

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, today I invite my colleagues to pay tribute to Donald Weber on the occasion of his retirement as Superintendent of Community School District 21.

Donald Weber has long been known for his commitment to the children of Community